

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship between a first and a second network-enabled appliance, the first and the second network-enabled appliances being connected to an interconnected network, the method comprising:

determining the address of the second network-enabled appliance with the first network-enabled appliance, the address of the second network-enabled appliance being associated with the interconnected network;

sending a ping message to the second network-enabled appliance from the first network-enabled appliance through the interconnected network;

selectively responding to the ping message from the first network-enabled appliance with the second network-enabled appliance;

selectively establishing a periodicity between the sending of subsequent periodic ping messages; and

periodically selectively sending subsequent periodic ping messages from the first network-enabled appliance to the second network-enabled appliance through the interconnected network and where the time interval between the subsequent periodic ping messages is associated with the established periodicity.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the ping message uses an HTTP POST method.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the ping message uses an FTP method.

4. The method of Claim 1, the method further comprising:

selectively sending a notification message in the event that an expected periodic ping is not received.

5. The method of Claim 4 wherein the notification method is sent to a remote location.

6. The method of Claim 4 wherein the notification method is sent to another network-enabled appliance connected to the interconnected network.

7. A network-enabled appliance operable to establish a peer-to-peer review relationship, the network-enabled appliance comprising:
a processor;
a network interface communicatively coupled to the processor, the network interface connected to an interconnected network;
a storage medium communicatively coupled to the processor, the storage medium operable to store instruction sets; and
an instruction set for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship with one or more other network-enabled appliances.

8. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7 wherein the processor is a Java-based processor.

9. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7, the network-enabled appliance further comprising:

a means for communicating with a remote system.

10. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7, the network-enabled appliance further comprising:

at least one sensor communicatively coupled to the processor.

11. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 10, the network-enabled appliance further comprising:
at least one threshold, the at least one threshold associated with values measured by the at least one sensor.

12. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 11, the network-enabled appliance further comprising:
an instruction set for sending a notification in response to the at least one threshold being met by the values measured by the at least one sensor.

13. A cluster of two or more network-enabled appliances, the cluster comprising:
the two or more network-enabled appliances, each connected to an interconnected network, at least one of the two or more network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with a remote system; and
each of the two or more network-enabled appliances operable to establish one or more peer-to-peer review relationships with one or more other network-enabled appliances within the cluster.

14. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more network-enabled appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system using an HTTP POST method.

15. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more network-enabled appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system using an FTP method.

16. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more of the network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system acts as an intermediary between the remote system and the other network-enabled appliances within the cluster.

17. The cluster of Claim 16 wherein a second of the two or more network-enabled appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system and establishes a peer-to-peer review relationship with the at least one of the two or more of the network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system and acting as the intermediary.

18. The cluster of Claim 17 wherein the second of the two or more of the network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system selectively assumes a network address of the first of the two or more of the network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system acting as the intermediary in the event that the first of the one or more of the network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system fails.

19. A network-enabled appliance operable to establish a peer-to-peer review relationship, the network-enabled appliance comprising:
a processor;
a network interface communicatively coupled to the processor, the network interface connected to an interconnected network;
a storage medium communicatively coupled to the processor, the storage medium operable to store instruction sets;
an instruction set for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship with one or more other network-enabled appliances;

an instruction set for communicating with a remote system;
at least one sensor communicatively coupled to the processor;
at least one stored threshold value, the at least one stored threshold value associated with
values measured by the at least one sensor; and
an instruction set for sending a notification in response to the at least one stored threshold
value being met by the values measured by the at least one sensor.

20. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program
of instructions executable by the machine to perform methods steps for establishing a peer-to-
peer relationship between a first and a second network-enabled appliance, the method steps
comprising:
determining the address of the second network-enabled appliance with the first network-
enabled appliance, the address of the second network-enabled appliance being associated with
the interconnected network;
sending a ping message to the second network-enabled appliance from the first network-
enabled appliance through the interconnected network;
selectively responding to the ping message from the first network-enabled appliance with
the second network-enabled appliance;
selectively establishing a periodicity between the sending of subsequent periodic ping
messages; and
periodically selectively sending subsequent periodic ping messages from the first
network-enabled appliance to the second network-enabled appliance through the interconnected
network where a time interval between the subsequent periodic ping messages is associated with
the established periodicity.

1 21. A method for utilizing a resource associated with a network appliance, the
2 resource being cataloged in a directory, the method comprising:
3 querying the directory to determine an address location of the network appliance
4 associated with the resource;
5 commanding the network appliance associated with the resource to perform a function
6 associated with the resource; and
7 the network appliance performing the function associated with the resource.

1 22. The method of Claim 21 wherein the steps of querying and commanding are
2 performed by a network appliance.

3 23. The method of Claim 21 wherein the directory is associated with a server.

4 24. The method of Claim 21 wherein the directory is associated with a directory
5 network appliance.

6 25. A directory for cataloging resources available to a cluster of one or more network
7 appliances, the directory being accessible by the one or more network appliances, the directory
8 comprising:

9 at least one record, the at least one record storing data associated with a network
10 appliance and data associated with a resource associated with the network appliance, the
11 directory operable to receive and respond to queries from the one or more network appliances,
12 the queries requesting the data stored in the at least one record.

1 26. The directory of Claim 25 wherein the directory is associated with a server.

1 27. The directory of Claim 25 wherein the directory is associated with a network
2 appliance.

3 28. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:

4 at least one shared data object associated with one or more of the one or more network
5 appliances.

6 29. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:

7 at least one shared configuration object associated with one or more of the one or more
8 network appliances.

- 1 30. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:
2 at least one email notification list, the email notification list comprising one or more
3 email addresses.
- 1 31. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:
2 at least one SNMP trap notification list.